

TESTIMONY OF THE FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN BAND ON BILL 15
(2010) RELATING TO THE EXECUTIVE OPERATING BUDGET AND PROGRAM
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2010 TO JUNE 30, 2011

APRIL 12, 2010

THE FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN BAND IS AN ORGANIZATION
THAT WAS FORMED TO BE A PART OF PRESERVING THE MUSICAL
HISTORY OF THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN BAND. THIS ORGANIZATION IS
ALSO DEDICATED TO MAINTAINING THE BAND'S UNIQUE TRADITION AS
HAWAII'S OFFICIAL MUSICAL REPRESENTATIVE AND ENSURING THAT
THE BAND'S RICH HAWAIIAN SOUND WILL CONTINUE TO BE ENJOYED
THROUGHOUT HAWAII AND THE WORLD BY GENERATIONS TO COME. WE
ARE AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF APPROXIMATELY 200
MEMBERS.

THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN BAND WAS FOUNDED IN 1836 BY KING
KAMEHAMEHA III, THROUGH THE GUIDANCE OF TWO GREAT HAWAIIAN
LEADERS MAYOR JOSEPH FERN WHO WAS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL BY
THE PEOPLE AND PRINCE JONHA KUHIO KALANIANA'OLE PI'IKOI,
THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN BAND BECAME PART OF THE CITY AND COUNTY
OF HONOLULU RIGHT FROM THE TIME OF THE CITY'S INCORPORATION
THUS BECOMING A MUNICIPAL BAND. IT BECAME A PART OF THE CITY'S
CHARTER.

THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN BAND IS ONE OF THE LAST LIVING LINKS TO
HAWAII'S MONARCHY.

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WHAT THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN BAND BRINGS TO THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU MAY NOT ALWAYS BE SO OBVIOUS IN DOLLARS AND CENTS BUT IN FACT IT HAS AN ENORMOUS IMPACT ON OUR OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE, ESPECIALLY COMPARED TO THE INSIGNIFICANT PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL CITY BUDGET IT CONSUMES (WHICH IS ABOUT 1%).

NO ONE ELSE REPRESENTS THE CITY LIKE THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN BAND. NO ONE ELSE REPRESENTS OUR UNIQUE CULTURAL LEGACY IN QUITE THE SAME WAY AS WELL.

THERE ARE SOME WHO ARGUE THAT NO OTHER MAJOR METROPOLITAN AREA IN THE UNITED STATES FUNDS A CITY BAND ANYMORE, BUT PLEASE BEAR IN MIND THAT NO OTHER CITY IN THE UNITED STATES WAS FORMERLY THE CAPITOL OF AN INDEPENDENT KINGDOM EITHER.

HONOLULU'S UNIQUE CULTURAL HERITAGE BEQUEATHS THE CITY A UNIQUE HISTORIC AND CULTURAL LEGACY AS WELL AS AN ONGOING RESPONSIBILITY TO PRESERVE IT. WE WOULD BE PENNY WISE AND DOLLAR FOOLISH TO ELIMINATE A BAND ESTABLISHED BY KING KAMEHAMEHA III, A BAND THAT PROUDLY REPRESENTS THE CITY IN MORE THEN THREE HUNDRED FREE PUBLIC EVENTS EVERY YEAR, FOR A MONETARY SAVINGS OF A MERE ONE PERCENT. THE IDEA COMPARES TO A PROPOSAL ONCE FLOATED BY PUBLIC FIGURES TO DEMOLISH THE IOLANI PALACE AND REPLACE IT WITH A PARKING LOT. YOU MAY ALSO

RECALL THAT AT ONE TIME THERE WAS DISCUSSION OF DEMOLISHING
ALI'OLANI HALE.

CONSIDER WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED TO THE CULTURAL LIFE OF
HONOLULU IF THESE THINGS HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO HAPPEN
IF THE BAND WERE TO BE ELIMINATED, THE COST TO OUR UNIQUE ROYAL
HISTORY, TO OUR UNIQUE IMAGE IN THE WORLD AND TO OUR UNIQUE
MUSICAL TRADITIONS WOULD BE FAR HIGHER THAN THE SMALL SAVINGS
THAT WOULD BE REALIZED.

WHEN THE STATE FIRST CONSIDERED ABOLISHING THE STATE
FOUNDATION CULTURE AND THE ARTS IT WISELY RECONSIDERED
BECAUSE IT REALIZED THE LOSS (CULTURALLY AND FINANCIALLY)
WOULD BE FAR GREATER THAN THE ACTUAL SAVINGS.

BY THE SAME TOKEN, THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN BAND IS NOT REALLY THE
NEEDLESS LUXURY SOME PEOPLE MAY THINK IT IS. BESIDES
ESTABLISHING AN UNBROKEN LINK TO IMPORTANT HISTORY, FOR LOCAL
PEOPLE AND VISITORS ALIKE, THE BAND EXPRESSES ALOHA 'AINA (I.E.
PRIDE OF PLACE). THIS HELPS CONNECT THE GENERATIONS. IN TURN
THIS HELPS IMPROVE CIVIC PRIDE AND IN A ROUND-ABOUT WAY CAN
HELP IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVMENT. IT CAN EVEN LOWER CRIME
RATES BY GETTING YOUNG PEOPLE MORE CONNECTED TO THEIR
LOCALITY, THEIR FAMILIES AND THE ARTS LIKE THEY ARE PRESENTLY
DOING AS THEY HAVE BEEN WORKING SUCCESSFULLY WITH THE MELE
KAKOU PROGRAM RUN BY THE HAWAII YOUTH OPERA CHORUS UNDER

THE DIRECTON OF NOLA NAHULU.

THE FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN BAND URGES YOU TO
RECONSIDER CUTTING THE BUDGET OF THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN BAND.
WE HOPE THAT AFTER YOU HAD A CHANCE TO READ THE HISTORY OF
THE BAND AS PRINTED IN THE KA WAI OLA, THE OFFICE OF HAWAII
AFFAIRS NEWSPAPER MARCH ISSUE THAT WAS DELIVERED TO EACH OF
YOUR OFFICES LAST WEEK, IT WOULD GIVE YOU A BETTER UNDER-
STANDING OF WHY IT IS NECESSARY TO KEEP THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN
BAND IN THE CITY BUDGET.

I THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY BEFORE YOU THIS
MORNING.

ANTOINETTE L. LEE
PRESIDENT
FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN BAND

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